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EXPANSION AND PROTECTION.

OUR war seems to be over, and its consequences have begun. The change in our national policy which has agitated us so much, and which ought perhaps to have agitated us more, is an accomplished fact. We have crossed the Rubicon, perhaps unwisely, but beyond all hope of retreat. Some are terrified, and some are exultant; more, perhaps, are somewhat dazed. But all seem to realize that something portentous has happened, however much they may differ as to what it portends. In the present article I have no intention of passing judgment, either explicitly or implicitly, on the general policy of expansion. The question lacks completely the one element necessary to command our attention. It is *res adjudicata*. All the discussion in the world will not undo what we have done or relieve patriotism of the obligation of acquiescing in the result, not sullenly, but sympathetically, as a condition of farther service. Wisdom may be retrospective, but it cannot be retroactive.

Of course, this may be interpreted unsympathetically, as an ignoble abandonment of principles in quest of popularity, an effort to keep on the winning side lest we be spoiled instead of spoilers; and it is possible to deserve such a criticism. He must indeed be a novice in the duties of citizenship who cannot accept defeat without shaking his convictions or share in victory without forgetting his misgivings. But the insistence upon convictions and the expression of misgivings, which are a duty while action is pending, become an impertinence when action is past.

I say so much at the outset because the purpose which I have in view will require some review of recent events, and the passions of the hour can easily divert attention from the real point. It should hardly be necessary to state further that but one among many consequences of our recent action, and not the most important one, is here dealt with. Any good or harm which expansion may do us in connection with protection may be much more than counterbalanced in other quarters. The considerations here advanced will therefore furnish no sufficient basis for judging the policy of expansion; and even within the narrower field they make no pretensions to completeness. My purpose is to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.

The events of the last few months will always be memorable as illustrating the rapidity with which changes of public opinion regarding the most firmly established principles of our national policy may be effected under favoring conditions. No article of our political creed has seemed more certain than the Monroe Doctrine, a *modus vivendi* between the two hemispheres founded on mutual recognition and forbearance. This was unanimously accepted by the American people until the first of May of the year 1898. And yet it was abrogated in spirit by this same people, perhaps as early as the first of June. This naturally suggests the question whether like surprises are

in store for us in connection with other principles which seem firmly established in the popular mind. Protection is certainly a chief citadel in our Zion. It has been attacked from the very first with the utmost energy and persistence by enemies of resource; yet, though sometimes sore beset and seemingly doomed to succumb, it has so far baffled its beleaguers, and looks to-day more impregnable than ever. The protectionist of course sees in this triumph of his principle the recognition of its justice and the expression of a determination on the part of the people not to sacrifice its advantages; while the free trader sees in it the clash of class interests and the continual triumph of the shrewd and well-organized few over the short-sighted and unorganized many. Without ranging ourselves on either side of the controversy, let us note the principal incidents and characteristics of the struggle.

The American protective policy may be fairly ascribed to Alexander Hamilton. The reasons he assigned for his famous proposal were such as he thought would weigh with men whom he must persuade, but could not take wholly into his counsel. The reason which really actuated him may best be inferred from his policy, then misunderstood, but now seen to have been followed with marvellous singleness of purpose; namely, the consolidation of the American union and the development of the national consciousness. Financiers who were not statesmen have ridiculed his taxes, which scarcely paid the cost of collection and which produced little but irritation. But Hamilton knew what he was about. The excise taxes kept the fact of the federal government conspicuous before men who were inclined to forget it, and roused petty rebellions which gave a welcome opportunity to display federal authority; while the import duties accomplished the same purpose by emphasizing national boundaries and increasing that national isolation which Hamilton

and Washington strove to wrap like swaddling-clothes about the infant nation. With all their efforts, they achieved but a meagre and precarious success until the three years' war with England re-enforced their efforts, and, by its artificial isolation of our industries encouraged investments which protective legislation was afterwards invoked to perpetuate. Then came forty-five years of half-hearted and vacillating protection, followed by another war which again cast the sword into the wavering scale. Since then the policy thus firmly established has had but a single brief reverse.

Whatever economic and other arguments may have influenced this development, there can be little doubt that it has been intimately connected with the growth and consolidation of the Union and the development of the national consciousness. Our jealousy of foreign interference and foreign connections, our provincialism and self-sufficiency, have made the principle of America for the Americans a most congenial one in all connections. This has profoundly affected the national imagination, and established a taste for isolation, a predilection for those arrangements which consist with national independence and self-sufficiency. It is surprising that those who have so long debated the question of protection have shown so little appreciation of the fact that they were addressing a biassed jury. Urged to open their ports to the world's commerce, the people have rejected all demonstrations of economic advantage with seemingly incorrigible prejudice. "We are loath to believe that such an arrangement would be to our advantage; but, if it were, it is not to our taste." Such an answer would epitomize the traditional American attitude on this subject. It exasperates the economists, at least those among them who unconsciously exalt their exposition of self-interest into a philosophy of human conduct. Looked at from the standpoint of our national situation and our national necessity, it is perfectly intelli-

gible, and of course in its time and place justifiable. We began our national life with a dangerous lack of cohesion, and have passed through more than one crisis which we can hardly look back upon without a shudder. The insurance of national stability was infinitely more important than the insurance of larger dividends. How are nations solidified? By calculations of co-operative advantage and acts of incorporation? Never; but by the growth of sentiments of preference for one another and of relative dislike or disdain for outsiders. It must never be forgotten that those sentiments which hold nations together, when regarded in their character of reasonable judgments, are mere prejudices. This does not prevent their being both useful and necessary. It is but a prejudice that we esteem our wives and our children to be better than other peoples'; but woe to the integrity of family life, when these prejudices lose their hold upon us! The first thing in the formation of nations is therefore, not the development of the most appropriate industries, but the development of the most appropriate prejudices.

The rôle of national prejudice is far greater than is usually supposed; and it affects the action of classes usually believed to be quite exempt from its influence. It is generally assumed, for instance, that business men, the shrewd organizers of industry, are little influenced by sentiment, and that, wherever they see a chance of profit, there they will go. It is doubtless true that sentiment in the ordinary form, of the sort recognized and rather disparaged as such, finds little place in the business man's ordinary calculations. If he sees an opportunity to make money, he is not likely to be deterred from taking it by considerations of charity or patriotism or religion. Not that every business man will ignore these considerations; but some will always be found to do so, and therefore we are justified in assuming that, wherever there is an obvious chance of profits, business will go.

But this is very different from saying that, wherever there is a chance of profits, business will go, simply because not all chances of profits are obvious chances. And one of the great factors in determining whether an opportunity is obvious or not is the national prejudice, or, if we prefer a less disparaging term, let us say the prevalent culture, ideas, and temper of the nation. This is perfectly apparent when we consider nations far removed from us. For instance, the Chinese have possessed in their coal-fields an inexhaustible source of wealth; but, though they have known that the coal was there and known that it would burn, they have made little use of it. In their own way their business men are vigilant and enterprising, but they do not turn their enterprise in this direction. The reasons are fairly characteristic. Even the fear that, if holes are dug in the ground, the old dragon will escape and devour them, is not wholly without counterpart in more civilized communities. But the real reason is that there are difficulties in the way of utilizing coal which can only be overcome by centuries of patient experiment, necessarily presupposing a very deep and widely diffused interest in the problem. A single individual has neither the time nor the means for such a task. Above all, he is too dependent on the prevailing currents of social opinion to turn his energies persistently in a different channel. And the general direction of Chinese industrial development has not been such as to bring to this problem an attention sufficient for its solution. The business man is, after all, but a variation upon the national type. He cannot be independent of the flood of suggestion which pours in upon him from every side, stimulating his imagination and shaping his ideals. Still less can he ignore the concrete rewards and penalties which society metes out to his efforts. The industrial explorer never travels far without a commission from society. Opportunities do not lie around like manna, to be had for the taking. They are

locked fast and hidden far away in nature's labyrinth, and only after many failures and the combined efforts of whole industrial groups are they brought to light. An "obvious opportunity" is not an accident of nature, but a social achievement.

American enterprise is no exception to this principle. Our business men are as enterprising as any in the world. Their energy and intelligence in the competitive struggle have made our industrial progress unparalleled in history. And yet outside the field upon which national attention has been directed they have shown an apathy and shiftlessness almost incredible. South American trade has long offered a tempting field, if profits alone could tempt, but a field which requires study, and adaptation to conditions and prejudices unlike our own. Americans, famed at home for their power to discern the slightest whim and flatter the subtlest sensibilities, have scarcely made a serious effort to enter this inviting field.

But this seeming inconsistency in the conduct of clear-headed men is explained by the necessary subservience of the individual to collective ideals and judgments. Our attention as a people has been introspective, and the national imagination has necessarily developed in this direction. In fields where the nation has had little interest and less sympathy, the national imagination, and that of our industrial leaders as well, have remained dormant and uncreative. The appeals of economic reasoning have been seed upon stony ground.

This has been conspicuously true of our protective policy. It is the commonest thing in the world for the protectionist to concede that the free-trader's position is logically unassailable, without feeling called upon in the least degree to alter his own belief or action on that account. He is a protectionist because that policy is attuned to his national instincts and to the way of viewing things and doing things with which he is familiar.



This reason being too fundamental, too much a part of the constitution of his universe, to admit of formulation, he formulates others which are of little consequence to us, and in an emergency of little consequence to himself. I am not saying that there are no economic arguments for protection, but simply that it is not these arguments that have made Americans protectionists. If these arguments ran counter to the general currents of national feeling and intellectual habit, all the infant industries and pauper labor in the world would not commend this policy to us. If accident had made us free-traders, the case would have been essentially the same. We should have had a policy based on instinct and intrenched in prejudice; that is, in feelings which were the outgrowth of special conditions, but which would have seemed to us laws of nature. And, overlooking the true grounds of the faith that was in us, we should have devised a superficial and sophistical justification for it, and should have gone blandly on when its superficiality was exposed. *The fundamental social incentives are unconscious, and hence popular explanations of social phenomena have but a partial and fortuitous validity.*

We can both illustrate this important principle and advance another step towards our conclusion by glancing briefly at the events that ushered in our recent change of policy. They were characterized, as has been said, by extraordinary precipitancy in decision and action, and by the most striking changes of conscious attitude and popular argument. We went to war because we felt like it, because our blood was up and our patience exhausted. In deference to a natural instinct, we put our best foot forward, and faced our critics and our consciences with the most presentable, if not the most potent, of the incentives by which we were consciously animated. We were waging "a war of humanity." To enforce our point, we even made certain remarks about "criminal aggression," which were perhaps unfortunate. The argument was shallowly sin-

cere; that is, as sincere as any argument can be which is based on the diplomatic instinct and a completely inadequate analysis of our own impulses. That we then had no thought of annexation is doubtless true; for that was several months ahead, and for a future so remote we had few thoughts of any kind. But when we got to the Antilles and the Philippines, we felt like staying, and so we stayed. Recollections of "criminal aggression" would have troubled us if we had thought so far back, but we seemed as little inclined to think backward as forward. A few more sensitive spirits thought that humanity required us to keep the Philippines, but most Americans had more sense of humor. Other things now appealed to the imagination,—national honor, "Old Glory," new markets,—and we frankly owned their sway.

The significant thing in all this is the way it was brought about. Let us imagine that, instead of fighting with Spain, we had remained her friend, and as a mark of favor she had offered to sell her distracted colonies to us, in preference to other customers, for one or two hundred millions,—a fraction of what the war has cost. Such a proposition would have presented to the hard-headed calculator every inducement which the present arrangement offers, and many others. We should have had the territories, the coaling stations, the markets, the patronage, and the prestige which we now anticipate; and we should have less national debt and less pensions and soldiers' graves. If the present bargain is a good one, the other would have been several hundred millions better. How long would it have taken to persuade the American people to make such a purchase? The answer is perfectly easy. No possible demonstration of advantage would have secured for the question even a passing interest. The possibility of an enlarged foreign commerce and of an Anglo-Saxon federation, to a people jealous of foreign competition and traditionally suspicious of Great

Britain, would have been positively repellent. Coaling stations in the Orient would have been looked upon as necessary only to a navy which we did not need, and which would become an artificial necessity as soon as we had these same coaling stations. The foreign commerce thus secured would never be worth the cost of political control, and could be as well secured without it. And so on indefinitely. These arguments may all be fallacious; but they would all have been plausible, and, as everybody knows, were so, up to a very recent date. All the arguments that could be urged in favor of the purchase of the Spanish colonies would never have sufficed to bring the matter to a vote in Congress.

And it is not these arguments that have induced us to enter upon the far worse bargain which we are about to make. The talk about acquiring new markets and extending the benefits of American civilization to inferior races is the veriest sham. Something may be accomplished in both these directions; but we have not a particle more proof of it now than we had a year ago, when we should have flouted the argument. By virtue of what discovery or revelation have these considerations acquired such sudden mastery of our judgments?

The answer is of the utmost importance to our inquiry. It is not that these considerations have acquired new character or importance, but that a change has taken place in the *unconscious* forces which control our action, such that arguments which we formerly found it congenial to ignore we now find it convenient to emphasize. The people who a year ago would tell you that our home markets were worth more than those of all the rest of the world now talk as if the Tagals were customers whom it was worth any sacrifice to secure. They did not know before and do not know now anything definite about the value of either, nor does the action they urge have any necessary relation to the end they seek to accomplish.

They *feel* differently now: that is all. The argument that has won them is the booming of Dewey's cannon, the sinking of the "Merrimac," and the planting of the stars and stripes on the hill of San Juan. These have stirred that instinct of domination slumbering in every people which has achieved supremacy in the age-long struggle for existence,—an instinct without which it would not have been and without which it would cease to be. The instinct to grasp and subdue and control may, in times of peace, be dormant or manifest itself only in milder forms. But apply the proper stimuli, give vivid and dramatic suggestion to the imagination, and the forgotten impulse will awake to sudden life and go tingling out to the very finger-tips. To minds in this state of exaltation, arguments appeal, not in proportion as they are reasonable, but in proportion as they are dramatic and striking.

The recent war, however insignificant in military importance, has exceeded in dramatic interest any war of modern times. When the lion within us was showing signs of waking under the gnat-like irritation of Spanish imbecility in Cuba, there came the destruction of the "Maine," the most dramatic event of its kind in the century. The lion sprang up with a roar, and tugged at his chain. The proposal of arbitration was not the least imbecile of Spain's transactions. Not that arbitration was unreasonable, but that it was impossible. The most superficial knowledge of human nature should convince us that there are moods which nothing will placate except instant and prone submission, and crimes which nothing will expiate save a dire and visible penalty. Then came a series of short decisive engagements, remarkable quite as much for the folly of the enemy as for the skill of our arms, but peculiarly adapted to appeal to the imagination. We have drunk of a wine to which we are little accustomed, and our intoxication is the more complete because of the unwonted indulgence.

What is the supreme result of this war? I believe it is to be found, not in new territories or new problems and institutions, but in a new direction of the national imagination. The introspective period is over, and the attention and interest of the people are turning powerfully outward. This is at bottom an emotional change, a change of sentiments or prejudices. It expresses itself, as usual, in intellectual terms and under the guise of reason and deliberation. Arguments long in disfavor are sought to do sudden duty, all because the nation has experienced "a change of heart." Whether it will be permanent or not will depend, as in all such cases, upon the pressure of environing conditions: but for the present it is a reality.

What effect will this change in the direction of the national imagination have upon protection? Only one answer is possible: it must lessen its hold upon the popular mind. As momentary phases of political policy, protection and expansion may be combined; but, as expressions of national temper, they are incompatible. If it be true, as I have contended, that American protection is due primarily to the American temper, and that economic arguments which utterly transcend the ordinary intelligence are a product of the policy rather than its effective cause, then we must conclude that a change in the direction of the national imagination which makes remote regions the subject of general and eager attention, to the temporary disadvantage of home interests, must react upon men's inclinations and action; must modify their reasoning, raising some arguments to honor and consigning others to disgrace; must change, in short, our industrial policy. The change will not be as rapid or as complete as that in connection with the Monroe Doctrine, because no such dramatic incidents are likely to impress the imagination; but the direction of the change cannot be doubtful.

To this general consideration are to be added others, less important, but more concrete. Chief among these is the necessity of dealing with the Spanish tariffs in our new dependencies. They have a very ugly look; indeed, all tariffs have, when looked at from the outside. It must be confessed that these Spanish types of the genus are peculiarly calculated to offend our sensibilities. An immediate reduction is conceded by all to be a necessity, and free trade between us and them is certainly a possibility. If Manila should be made a free port in the interest of that general Asiatic trade which is destined so greatly to exceed that with the Philippines themselves, and should develop a trade like that of Hong Kong,—if these and other possible changes, all necessarily in the direction of freer trade, should further or seem to further general prosperity, the influence of such an object-lesson would certainly be unfavorable to protection.

Hardly less important than our dependencies must be reckoned the influence of our new relation to Great Britain. That country, with great sagacity as well as real sympathy, has utilized the recent occasion to ingratiate herself to the utmost with the new power whose speedy development she has foreseen. It is not certain that we needed her help at any time during the recent war, but we knew we might have needed it, and felt sure we could have it if we did. The fact that other nations felt this, too, is probably one reason why the help was not called for. That is to say, England did help us in a most effectual way, and is rewarded with our genuine and, let us hope, durable friendship.

But, it will be said, friendship does not necessarily mean free trade. England's own colonies, even the most patriotic, do not have free trade with the mother country, and, with a single recent exception, do not grant her any preference. How can she expect more from us? Logically, she cannot; but logic has not much to do with it.

Anglo-American friendship must react in many ways on our commercial policy. England is the great object-lesson of free trade. No other developed people ever tried free trade long enough to eliminate the factor of transition disturbance, and really test it. The prosperity of England, though by no means altogether due to free trade, was at least proof that free trade did not mean certain ruin, and was certainly a powerful argument in favor of that policy. Of course, such an argument had the same logical value before the friendship as after; but it had not the same emotional value, and it cannot be too often insisted that this is the all-important consideration. We have but to recall the part which hatred and jealousy of England have played in all tariff discussions, to appreciate the change which friendship is likely to effect. Who does not remember the cartoons which represent John Bull, fat and patronizing, dictating terms to meek Brother Jonathan and his family; and then, in contrast with this consummation of free trade, the exultant protectionist ideal, in which Uncle Sam, proud and disdainful, turns away from the hungry suppliant in whose emaciated features we still recognize John Bull? Newspaper editorials and campaign speeches and tracts by the million have pointed the same moral and appealed to the same prejudice. Doubtless the argument never appealed to the highest intelligence and the most generous spirits of the country, but its power over the popular mind from first to last is beyond question. It is hardly too much to say that to many the fact that a high tariff was likely to displease and injure England was quite as strong an argument for enacting it as the prospect that it would benefit ourselves.

Something of this same spirit is to be seen in the formula in which a prominent protectionist has expressed what he conceives to be the protectionist plan of campaign: "Find out what your enemy wants, and then

don't do it." It is certainly significant that this assumption of necessary hostility between trading nations should have passed unchallenged. Everybody knows that merchants do not lie awake nights, thinking how they can do what their customers do not want them to do; and popular logic might have been expected to see a certain analogy between the two situations. Why has it not done so?

In international trade, as we all know, nations are related to one another in two ways,—as customers and as competitors. The first relation is essentially one of friendship, based on mutual advantage. The second is one of hostility, growing out of opposing interests. We try to please our customers and circumvent our competitors. It is often difficult to determine the relative importance of the two relations in a given case, but both are usually obvious enough. Why, then, do people see only the one? The answer is that they are influenced by other considerations. They see what they feel like seeing, and overlook what they find unfavorable to their prejudices. There can be no doubt that feelings engendered in other connections,—political, religious, and the like,—greatly affect the imagination and judgment in economic matters. The nation which we hate will be remembered as a competitor; and we shall feel inclined to injure its trade by withdrawing our own custom, however doubtful the result to ourselves. The nation that we love, on the other hand, we shall remember as a customer, and court accordingly. We have seen that the influence of our traditional dislike for England has been conspicuous in all previous popular discussions of protection. On the other hand, the effect of our new-found friendship is already apparent in the negotiations with Canada. Reciprocity with Canada is no more sensible now than a year ago, but it is far more popular.

Our relation to England will react upon our commer-



cial policy in another and entirely different connection; namely, the general Oriental policy to be pursued by both nations. Our trade with the Philippines cannot but lead to an enlarged trade with Asia; and, as we shall hardly be able to extend our political control to the mainland, we shall have every reason to support the policy of the open door. Tariff barriers that would only narrow the trade of other powers would wholly ruin our own. No doubt it is physically possible for us to support a policy abroad—of course with free-trade arguments—which we reject at home; but such a position would not be a strong one, and could not fail to react upon our home policy. Finally, the relative free trade between ourselves and our dependencies must put the pauper-labor argument to a severe test. The ten or twelve millions of new citizens or wards thus acquired are as pauper as could be wished for the experiment. If they ruin us by their industrial competition, we shall all be convinced. If they do not, the protectionist will lose his trump card. There are certainly enough of them to settle the question.

We need not proceed farther in the enumeration of special influences which will occur to the thoughtful reader. It is sufficient to note that they all tend towards freer trade. The very growth of foreign commerce itself, from whatever cause, tends to create powerful and organized interests, restive of commercial restraint and forming a hitherto lacking counterweight to the closely organized manufacturing interests which have so successfully supported the policy of protection. Whatever may be the potency of these forces individually, there can be little doubt that in the aggregate their influence will be very great,—more than sufficient to tip the scale in crises such as we have had more than once, and are likely to have again. It is no part of my purpose to inquire whether such a change of policy would be beneficial or not; I have confined myself to the bare question as to the mode in

which recent political events are likely to affect our commercial policy.

In conclusion, it may be well to inquire how far these changes might have been effected without these events. Those who are opposed to both expansion and protection, and therefore unwilling to exchange the one for the other, often assume that the latter was quite unnecessary. A friend writes me that he is in favor of expansion, but believes it should be commercial rather than political. It is constantly argued by opponents of expansion that the acquisition of colonies is not necessary to the development of a foreign commerce. Physically, this is perfectly true. Our best foreign markets must always be countries which we cannot annex; and there is no logical reason why all our markets should not be so. But, to repeat, the question is much less a logical than a psychological one. We might adopt a policy of commercial expansion, and reject political expansion, if we had a mind to; but should we ever have been a mind to? It is doubtful, to say the least. Historically, the two policies seem never to have been separated, which suggests that they may be different manifestations of a single impulse, and so inseparable. England sells goods wherever she can. But she also plants her flag wherever she can. This has been largely a commercial necessity, no doubt; but it has been quite as largely a psychic necessity, a mere reflex action of the energetic and assertive temper which is the secret of her commercial success. Perhaps this is another case of the foible that is bound up with strength; and it may be that evolution is preparing a race which, by choosing the better part and eschewing the bauble of political domination, will be able to inaugurate a better era. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that we are that race. In vain the prophet of commercial expansion adjures us to fling away ambition and in meekness to inherit the earth. He con-

vinces, but he does not persuade. He has appealed to an impotent reason and ignored an omnipotent imagination. A policy of commercial expansion, involving, as it must, transition disturbance and hardship for many who are unable to anticipate its ultimate benefits, will not win favor if bereft of those showier adjuncts which dazzle the imagination and appeal to the primitive instincts. The man who begins a campaign against bosses and the spoils system by leading a charge against the Spaniards in Cuba may be very illogical, but he is the man whom the bosses dread.

These conclusions may seem to be disparaging to democracy, but I do not feel them to be so. Democracy is government based upon the popular will, not government based upon the popular wisdom. The intellectual initiative, the power of exact analysis and large foresight requisite for the guidance of society,—these have ever been and must ever be the contribution of the few. The problem of democracy is now as ever how to enforce the wisdom of the few by the will of the many. It need not disturb us to discover that the many are moved by other considerations than those which influence the few. Here as everywhere there is law, and we govern by learning to obey.

H. H. POWERS.